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#### ADVANCES IN CHINESE FUEL INDUSTRIES IN 1950

After the establishment of the Ministry of Fuel Industry, in October 1949, a series of national conferences were held on coal, electricity, petroleum, etc. These conferences passed a number of resolutions regarding the improvement of technical skills, the increase of efficiency, the strengthening of the economic computation system, the reduction of production costs, and the development of high efficiency using existing equipment. During the past year, the coal, electricity, and petroleum industries have pursued these goals.

#### Coal Mining

To meet the demands, for coal for transportation, industry, and civilian uses, together with the demand for export, the First National Coal Conference, under the principle of "consumption determining production," decided that the production of 1950 should be increased 29 percent over that of 1949. Seventy percent of the coal mines are owned and managed by the government. By the use of the economic computation system, the cost of production has been greatly reduced. For instance, production costs in the Northeast have been 10 percent less than was originally planned. In September 1950, the price of coal at the mines fell approximately 20 percent. Most important of all, many mines have begun to extract more of the seam than previously, thus reducing the waste of our natural resources and prolonging the life of the mines.

In May 1950, based upon the working experience and lessons acquired in certain coal mines, the Coal Conference made two decisions of historical importance on the improvement of production methods and the problem of safety in the coal mines. As a result of using these improved methods, the percentage of extraction in thick layer mines has been increased from 30 percent to 65 - 85 percent. In Hao-kang, extraction reaches 93 percent, and production efficiency has been 181 percent above the national average efficiency in the past. The Huai-nan Coal Mine of Anhwei Province used to be less efficient than the mines in the Northeast and North China, but a coal mining laborer, Mi Han-chang, created a new record there by producing 34 tons of coal in 5 hours.

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The most dangerous enemy in a coal mine is explosion of gas. Following the substitution of the longwall method of mining for the room-and-pillar method and the use of the back-filling method, replacing the roof-caving method, accidents become less frequent. For example, there were no accidents in Hao-kang and Tung-shan for a period of 5 months. Although the mines which have improved their production methods constitute only a small part of the total number of mines, and although only ten coal fields, all of which are located in Hao-kang have been fully mechanized, the movement to improve production has been spread widely in all the mines of the nation, and the coal miners are happy and willing to adopt new methods.

Electricity

Before the liberation there was a general shortage of electric power. At the National Electrical Industry Conference held in February 1950, Ch'en Yu, Minister of Fuel Industries, criticized the serious situation relentlessly. Ch'en has introduced the periodic inspection system, the system of responsible and safe production, the method of divided management, and other progressive measures as suggested by the Soviet experts, thus enabling the country's electrical industry to make a big stride forward.

From January to August 1950, the electric power supplied by state-owned power plants was increased 31 percent over the same period in 1949. The electric power sold was 58 percent more than that sold during the same period in 1949. The average utilization of generating equipment was increased from 22.7 percent in 1949 to 28.29 percent in 1950. The percentage of line damage was reduced to 16.97 percent, 48.57 percent less than that of the previous year. The ratio of coal consumption was reduced from 1.039 kilograms per unit for 1949 to 0.882 kilograms per unit for 1950. In short, in the past 10 months, over 110 million units of electric power and 300,000 tons of coal have been saved.

Owing to the gradual establishment of the periodic inspection system and the strengthening of inspection work, the generating capacity of electrical equipment in state-owned plants has been increased from 65 percent for last year to 78.8 percent for this year. Shih-ching-shan and Feng-shan electric plants have been developed to an unprecedented capacity. The plant which shows the best results in the movement to reduce coal consumption is the T'ang-shan Electric Plant; its achievement record is very close to that made in USSR electric plants. From October 1949 to May 1950, a record of consuming only 0.577 kilograms of coal for each unit of electricity generated has been achieved, an accomplishment worthy of being praised.

At the National Hydroelectric Engineering Conference held in July 1950, it was decided that the principal tasks for the hydroelectrical industry included selective explorations, restoration of the foundations already laid, development of high efficiency of the existing establishments, and the construction of small hydroelectric plants wherever and whenever possible. Before the 1950 flood, the Feng-shan Hydroelectric Plant in the Northeast had completed the urgent task of building dikes. Thus, it passed through two floods without damage. In China proper, surveys are being made; and many small new hydroelectric plants have been completed earlier than schedule. This has facilitated irrigation work in rural areas and indirectly increased agricultural production. This is a concrete example of the close relationship between industry and agriculture.

Petroleum Industry

At the National Petroleum Conference held in April 1950, Ch'en Yu, the Minister of Fuel Industries, asked his audience to learn from the advanced technical experience of the Soviet Union, to strengthen the idea of collectivism, to oppose waste, and to get rid of the old colonial habit of depending on imperialists for the development of our petroleum industry.

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In pursuance of the official policy of "self-sufficiency and moving steadily forward," China is concentrating on increasing domestic petroleum resources. For instance, there are twice as many exploration teams in 1950 as in 1949. The number of well-drilling teams has been increased by 50 percent. The Yu-men oil field, after being resurveyed, has proved to be 13 percent larger than previously estimated. Geologists in Shanghai and Szechwan have been mobilized to work in the Northeast.

In 1950 crude oil production was 24 percent above the production in 1949. The yield of gasoline from crude oil has reached 31.8 percent of the crude oil; it is hoped that by the end of 1950, the percentage will reach 51 percent. The economically low-value fuel oil has been reduced to 54 percent according to plan; it is possible that by the end of 1950, it could be reduced to 21.8 percent. The Yen-ch'ang oil wells of North Shensi, in the old liberated area, were very helpful during the war of defense. Well No 27 has already begun to yield a large output. To prolong the life of the well, a slow pump is now being used. Drillers of Well No 28 have been successful in reaching the oil layer.

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